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May 29, 2007
For Immediate Release

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Environment Secretary to Testify in Favor of California Clean Car Program before U.S. EPA Tomorrow in California

(Santa Fe, N.M.) New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry will urge the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on Wednesday in Sacramento to allow states to require greenhouse gas emissions reductions from cars and sport utility vehicles.

EPA is holding two public hearings to receive comments on California's request for a waiver under the Clean Air Act to allow the clean tailpipe standards to take effect. The first hearing was held in Washington, D.C. last week.

"Greenhouse gas emissions from cars and light trucks are expected to grow faster than any other sector in New Mexico," said Governor Richardson. "That is why New Mexico will adopt motor vehicle standards like California's by the end of the year."

"This issue goes well beyond California," Secretary Curry said. "If California is prohibited from adopting those standards, New Mexico and many other states that want to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation will be also."

The clean tailpipe standards – first adopted in California in 2004 – would reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from new vehicles about 30 percent, phased in from 2009 through 2016. The standards can be met with existing "off-the-shelf" automotive technologies.

Adopting the regulations was a unanimous recommendation of Governor Richardson's Climate Change Advisory Group for reducing transportation sector greenhouse gas emissions. A report released from the Advisory Group in December 2006 shows adoption of the California Clean Car standard as the group's most cost effective recommendation for meeting greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets established by Governor Richardson (<http://www.nmclimatechange.us/>).

Twelve states adopted the standards and six more, including New Mexico, are considering adoption. NMED will hold public meetings on the program beginning next month.

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